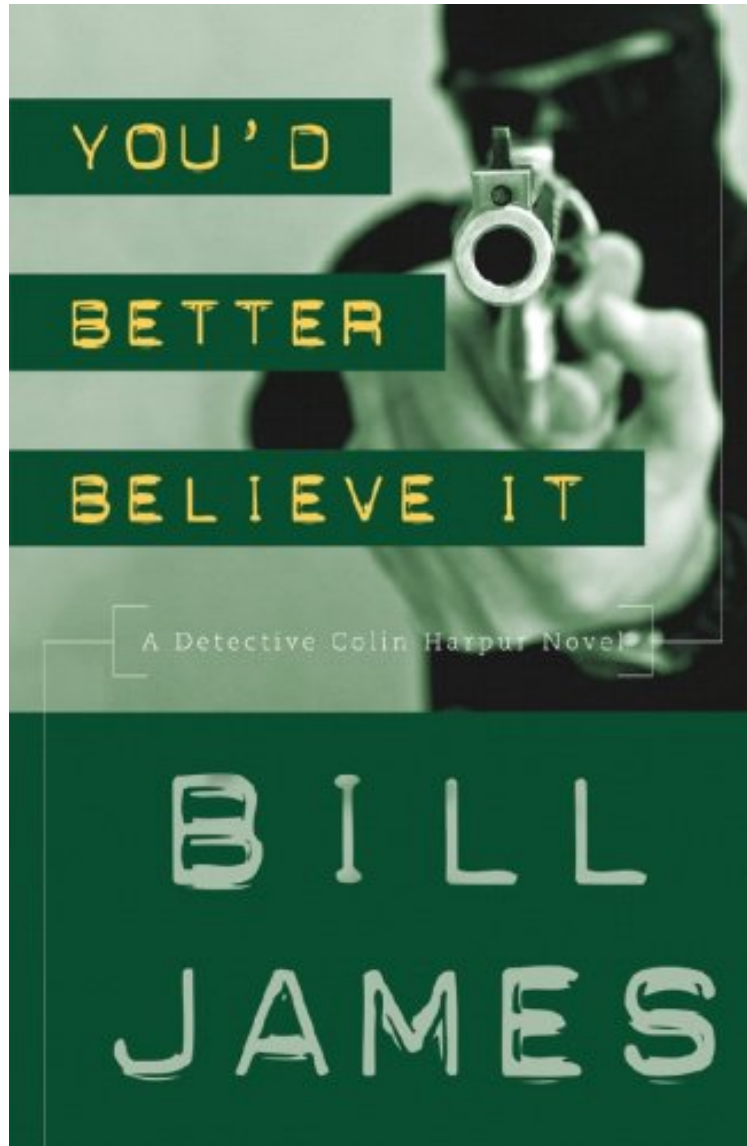


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## You'd Better Believe It (Vol. Book 1) (Harpur Iles Mysteries)

*Bill James*

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**Bill James : You'd Better Believe It (Vol. Book 1) (Harpur Iles Mysteries)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised You'd Better Believe It (Vol. Book 1) (Harpur Iles Mysteries):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Introducing Colin Harpur - unorthodox detective By Gabi Coatsworth This is the first of the Detective Colin Harpur novels, published in the 1980's, so before the age of cell phones. I mention this because technology has made writing contemporary crime fiction more complicated than it used

to be, since everyone knows everything instantly these days. This novel can use the old conventions, but essentially, is all about the character, a good detective who uses some unorthodox methods to fight crime in his small seaside town in England. My only slight beef was that I wanted more of a sense of place. I know those seaside towns, but if I hadn't, I wouldn't have been enlightened through this novel. But I will probably read the next one, and see how things go.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Addictive stuff

By Srdjan Pesic I collected about 20 books in this series through years. Bill James, well respected crime writer, somehow never got the recognition he justly deserves. But then, where is justice? I finally read the first book in the series and I am deeply hooked. His procedural is like nothing else written these days. Det. Superintendent Harpur is quite an original character. Sharp, capable, murky, dishonest, and many other things. In the world of Bill James, good guys are in short supply. It is hard to distinguish the villains from heroes. Is fighting a crime while committing a crime or at least overlooking the crime, less of a crime? I am looking forward to find out in the future books. This is seriously addictive stuff.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This is a skillfully written police procedural, but the ...

By gcm This is a skillfully written police procedural, but the cynicism, pessimism, lack of strong moral compass of the "hero", and the brutality are very off-putting. Not pleasant or light entertainment. gcm

The first mystery in the popular police procedural series introduces the long-suffering detective Colin Harpur. Nominated for England's Crime Writers' Association Gold Dagger Award in 1986, *You'd Better Believe It* introduced Detective Chief Superintendent Colin Harpur to reader in England and the United States. Harpur's domain is a small seaport city south of London. It's not unusual for the big-town criminals to consider such a spot as easy prey. At such times a policeman must rely keenly upon his colleagues, to be sure, and also upon his retinue of narks (tipsters). This time it's a Lloyd's Bank branch that's the target. When the heist is postponed, a policeman is killed. One nark, then another, is murdered. As Harpur becomes driven to his limit, he must bypass regulations and settle things once and for all with a vicious crook named Holly. But not necessarily on his own terms.

From Publishers Weekly The seamy, precarious alliances between the English police and their informants "narks" set the tone for this gritty novel. It's difficult to see who has the upper hand in the relationship between Detective Chief Superintendent Harpur, a seasoned and cynical master at bending the rules, and his narc, Jack Lamb, a smooth, high-living crook who is always ready to implicate Harpur in his own shady deals. Harpur tolerates Lamb's arrogance because of the wealth of information he has to offer, but things go too far when a seemingly routine investigation goes sour, leaving two informants dead and Brian Avery, Harpur's inexperienced new partner, missing. Soon Avery is found murdered and Harpur seeks information from Lamb, but he is nowhere to be found. Matters get more complicated when Avery's widow does some sleuthing of her own, but it is not until Harpur plunges into the depths of the criminal underworld that Lamb emerges. The pace is swift and the action bluntly violent in this satisfying caper.

January 28 Copyright 1985 Reed Business Information, Inc. A most promising debut... The toughest and most realistic language I have encountered in British mystery. -- *IDrood of Mystery*

The reader watches Chief Superintendent Colin Harpur in a small seaside town outside London put together a team of police, on a tip from a snitch, to capture bank robbers planning a heist at a Lloyd's bank branch. There is one failed attempt to catch the bank robbers prior to the actual, aborted bank robbery where the head of the heist gets away. The novel develops logically, and, the reader gets a glimpse into the life; of a small town police detective. The author, Bill James, a pseudonym for James Tucker, portrays a fair share of violence and the seedy side of life near London. Strong dialogue adds to good interaction among the main characters: Barton, the chief of the police department, who wants to retire with a clean slate; Lamb, the snitch or tipster who aids and abets Harpur; Avery, a young ambitious cop who gets killed because he's overly ambitious; Ruth Avery, his wife, who Harpur tries to seduce; and Holly, the antagonist. The strength of the book is its strong character development and diverse subplots. If there is a weakness, it's the use of English slang without a glossary. Without an English dictionary, or personal guide, to help with the meaning of words such as nark (tipster/snitch), grasser (snitch), nick (someone who has been arrested or "pinched"), and wanker (asshole), the reader can miss key elements of the story line and insight into the interaction between the characters. -- *From Independent Publisher*

About the Author Bill James has been called "the Elmore Leonard of Britain's underworld" (*Kirkus*) and has been named a "Master of Crime" in a mystery roundup by the *London Sunday Times*, which said, "There is nothing else quite like this series of police procedurals. James is concerned with the dilemmas and difficulties of policing Britain's inner cities, and he addresses these in hard-edged narratives that leave readers gasping and flinching, praying the people in these stories never come to live in their streets." In addition to the Harpur and Iles series, James is the author of other mystery series and a book on Anthony Powell. He lives in Wales.